



WASHOE COUNTY

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STAFF REPORT

BOARD MEETING DATE: August 9, 2016

DATE: July 5, 2016
TO: Board of County Commissioners
FROM: Scott Sosebee, Assistant Court Administrator, Reno Justice Court
325-6544, ssosebee@washoecounty.us
THROUGH: Peter Sferrazza, Chief Judge Reno Justice Court, 325-6550,
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Patricia Lynch, Judge Reno Justice Court, 325-6550,
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SUBJECT: Recommendation to acknowledge a grant award to support the Domestic Violence Compliance Court program, from the Nevada Office of the Attorney General to the Reno Justice Court [\$35,000.00 / 25% in-kind match required], retroactive from July 1, 2016 to June, 30 2017; and direct the Comptroller to make the appropriate budget adjustments. (All Commission Districts)

SUMMARY

In April 2016, the Reno Justice Court applied to the Nevada Office of the Attorney General to receive funding for the Domestic Violence Compliance Court program. The Domestic Violence Compliance Court is designed to address compliance issues arising out of domestic violence and domestic violence related cases. On June 15, 2016, the Reno Justice Court received notification that the sum of \$35,000 had been approved with a 25% match requirement. The 25% match requirement will be satisfied by an in-kind match.

Washoe County's Strategic Objective supported by this item: Safe, secure and healthy communities.

PREVIOUS ACTION

No previous action has been taken on the Domestic Violence Compliance Court or its related grant award.

BACKGROUND

Reno Justice Court's Domestic Violence Compliance Court began in March 2016. The program is a post-conviction court aimed at ensuring compliance with court imposed sentences on the more difficult domestic violence cases, such as all second-time

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convictions for domestic battery and the more violent cases. This compliance will be accomplished by increased monitoring through the hiring of a grant-funded compliance officer who will provide case management and coordination on these cases. Compliance will also be accomplished by increased monitoring by the Department of Alternative Sentencing (DAS), increased communication between the court and the Batterers Intervention Programs (BIPs), evaluations for substance abuse and mental health issues and referrals for treatment, monitoring of community service, payment of fines, stay-away orders, etc. Weekly court sessions will be held by a judge who can impose graduated sanctions to ensure compliance up to and including incarceration.

Each court in Washoe County implements its own compliance program for defendants of all crimes resulting in a somewhat haphazard system of enforcement. Most courts, including RJC, use DAS to monitor probation. Most judges use a system of reviews, Orders to Show Cause, and bench warrants/arrests to enforce compliance on domestic violence cases. Such a system is dependent on the flow of information to the judge, the resources available to gather that information, and the willingness or interest of the individual judge to take action. The information on attendance at BIPs is usually not timely and is reported on a monthly basis, at best. Attendance information is usually provided by the BIPs and is not actively sought out by the courts, making it a passive enforcement system. There are a number of certified BIPs in the Reno area that provide counseling to defendants, but none of these providers have the ability to enforce defendants' enrollment and attendance at their programs.

This court will differ from the other courts in this jurisdiction by actively working hand-in-hand with the BIPs to assure defendant participation through the services of a contracted compliance officer who will oversee defendants' timely enrollment, attendance, and completion of all required sessions. The contracted compliance officer will also work hand-in-hand with DAS to ensure that defendants are in compliance with all conditions of their suspended sentences, such as substance abuse requirements and no contact with the victim restrictions. The compliance officer will report up-to-date information on each defendant's compliance and/or non-compliance to RJC.

The judge in the court will hold weekly sessions to handle all the compliance issues and to monitor the success of defendants. If a defendant is noncompliant, the judge will impose graduated penalties to ensure compliance up to and including incarceration. The imposition of the sanctions will be imposed shortly after the non-compliance so that defendants understand they will be held accountable for their actions. RJC assumes its Domestic Violence Compliance Court will complement enforcement efforts of other courts by creating a strict compliance program among the BIPs who may report absences and problems with defendants in a timelier manner to other courts.

On June 15, 2016, the Reno Justice Court received notification that the sum of \$35,000 had been approved with a 25% match requirement. The 25% match requirement will be satisfied by an in-kind match. A subsequent grant budget revision was approved in July 5, 2016. The budget revision changed the budget categories for the award, but did not change the sum awarded.

GRANT AWARD SUMMARY

Project/Program Name: Domestic Violence Compliance Program (DVCP)

Scope of the Project: The Domestic Violence Compliance Court is a post-conviction court aimed at ensuring the defendants in domestic violence and domestic violence related cases are in compliance with court imposed sentences.

Benefit to Washoe County Residents: The target population for this project consists of domestic violence offenders within the jurisdiction of the Reno Justice Court with particular emphasis on second-time offenders and violent offenders. Offenders in cases involving strangulation, assault or battery with substantial bodily harm, kidnapping, and any other felony domestic violence-related cases that are reduced to misdemeanors will also be referred to the Program. Offenders in cases involving a strong power and control dynamic such as some first-time domestic violence, destruction of property, home invasion, false imprisonment, violation of protection orders, and stalking will be included. Statistics for the most recent fiscal year indicate a total of 521 new criminal cases were filed with the RJC that included sexual assault, domestic violence, home invasion, protection order violations, and stalking-related charges. Offenders of all racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds who are 18 years of age or older will also fall within the purview of this project. The majority of the domestic violence cases are initially heard in RJC, even if they are later bound over to District Court as felonies. The goal of the Domestic Violence Compliance Court is to ensure that defendants complete their court imposed sentences which will, hopefully, keep victims safer.

On-Going Program Support: On-going support of this program will be funded by grant funding and existing staff support.

Award Amount: \$35,000.00

Grant Period: July 1, 2016 – June 30, 9999

Funding Source: Nevada Office of the Attorney General, 2016 STOP/SASP Grant

Pass through From: N/A

CFDA Number: N/A

Grant ID Number: 2016-VAWA-53

Match Amount and Type: 25% in-kind match will be met by paying for program personnel support costs.

Sub-Awards and Contracts: N/A

FISCAL IMPACT

Should the board accept this grant award and approve these amendments, the adopted budget will be increased by \$35,000.00 in both revenues and expenditures in the following accounts:

Cost Object	G/L Account	Amount
Revenue:		
IO # TBD	432100 – State Grant	\$ 35,000.00
Expenditures:		
IO # TBD	710100 – Professional Services	\$ 35,000.00

The 25% in-kind match will be met by paying for Reno Justice Court personnel costs that support the program. It is estimated that Reno Justice Court personnel costs for the first year will total \$46,635, exceeding the match requirement of \$11,666.66.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Board of County Commissioners acknowledge a grant award to support the Domestic Violence Compliance Program, from the Nevada Office of the Attorney General to the Reno Justice Court [\$35,000.00 / 25% in-kind match required], retroactive from July 1, 2016 to June, 30 2017; and direct the Comptroller to make the appropriate budget adjustments.

POSSIBLE MOTION

Should the Board agree with staff’s recommendation, a possible motion would be:
“Move to acknowledge a grant award from the Nevada Office of the Attorney General to the Reno Justice Court [\$35,000.00 / 25% in-kind match required], retroactive from July 1, 2016 to June, 30 2017; and direct the Comptroller to make the appropriate budget adjustments. (All Commission Districts)